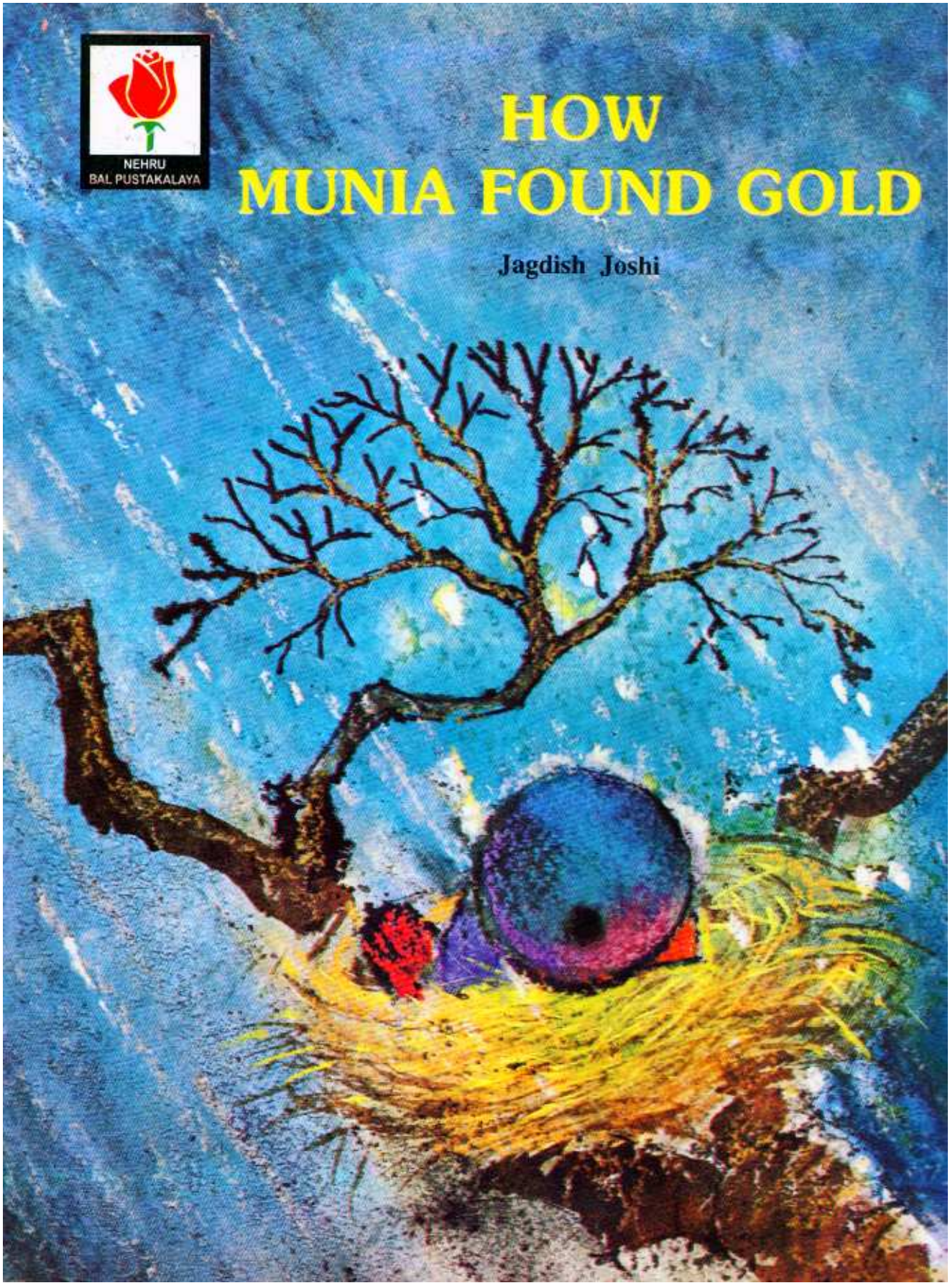
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BAL PUSTAKALAYA
HOW
MUNIA FOUND GOLD
Jagdish Joshi

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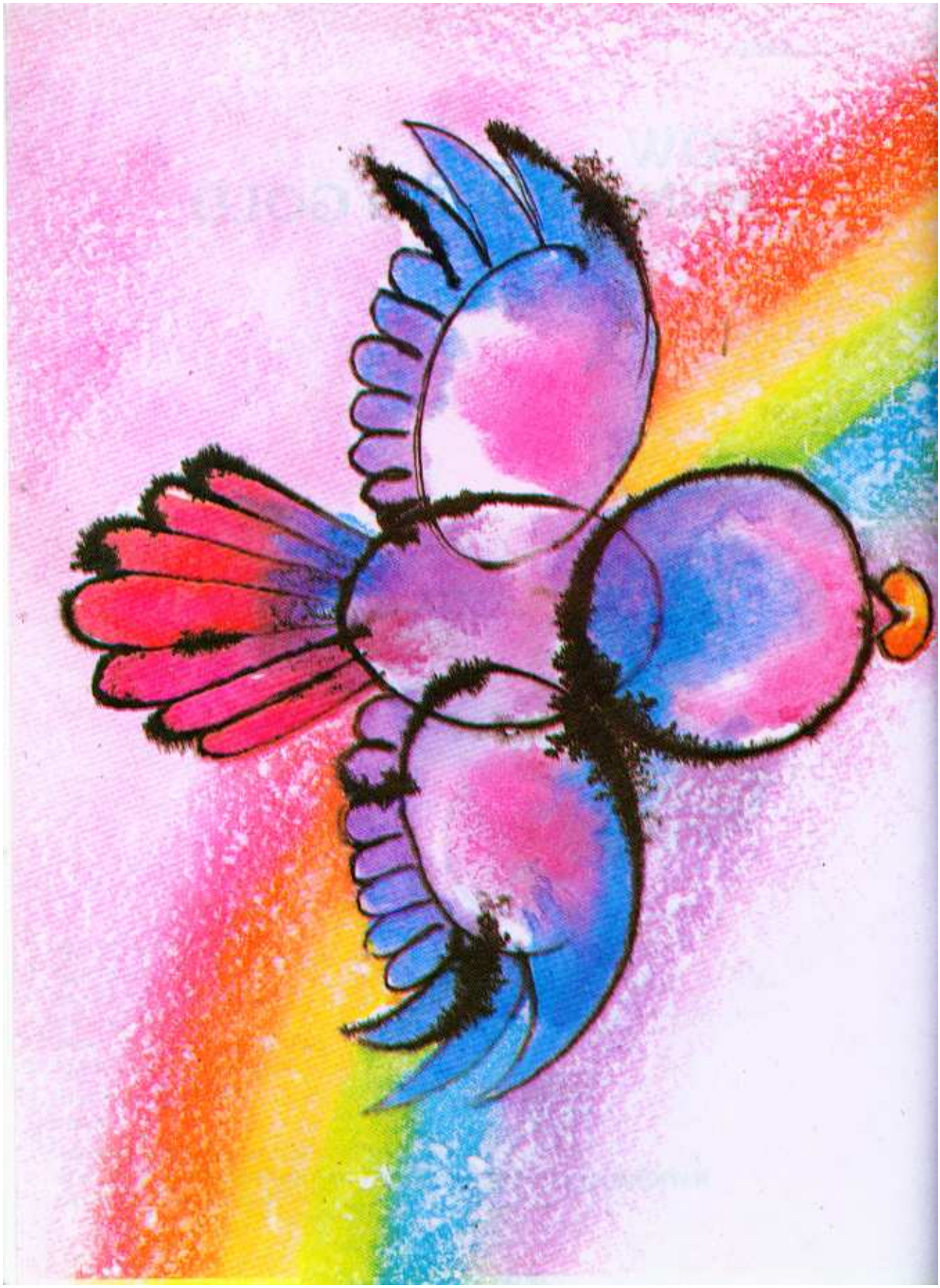
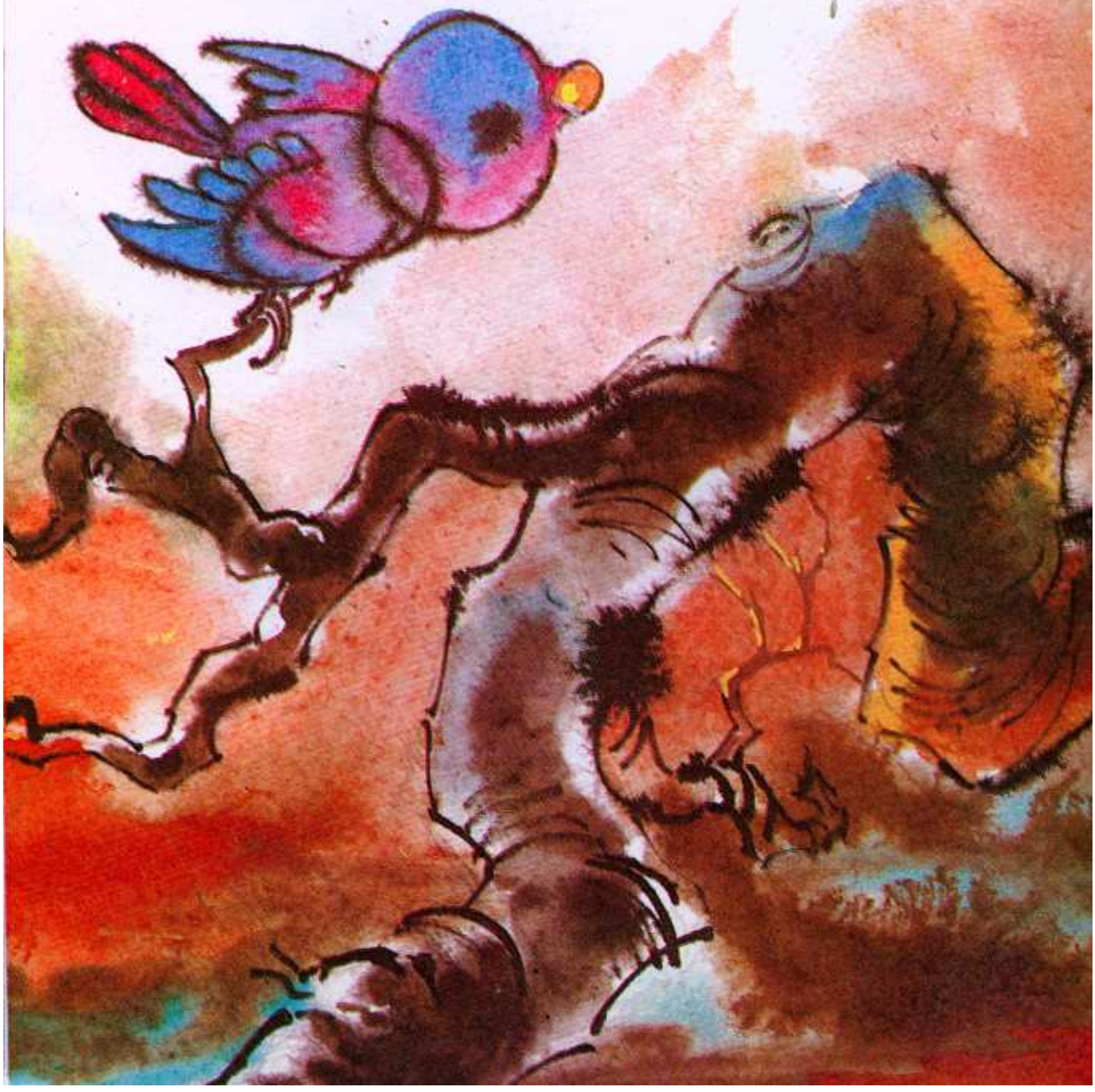


Munia, a tiny bird, lived in a big tree. Once during the monsoon it rained for many days and Munia was not able to leave her tree. She was wet and she was hungry.

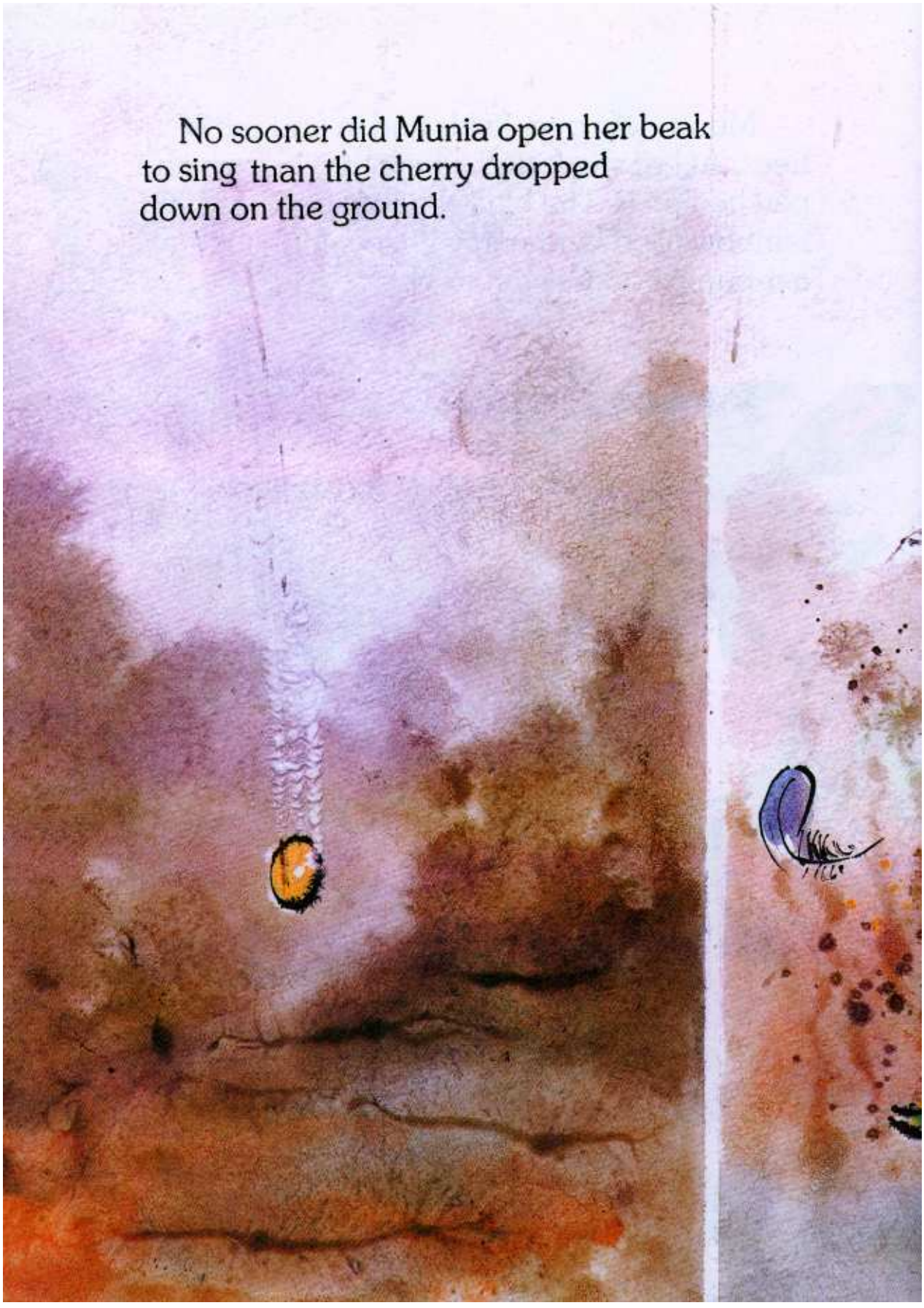
When the rain stopped and the sun broke through the clouds, a beautiful rainbow spanned the sky.

Munia flew into the garden. A ripe golden cherry lay on the ground. Picking it up she set off to look for a dry place to eat it.

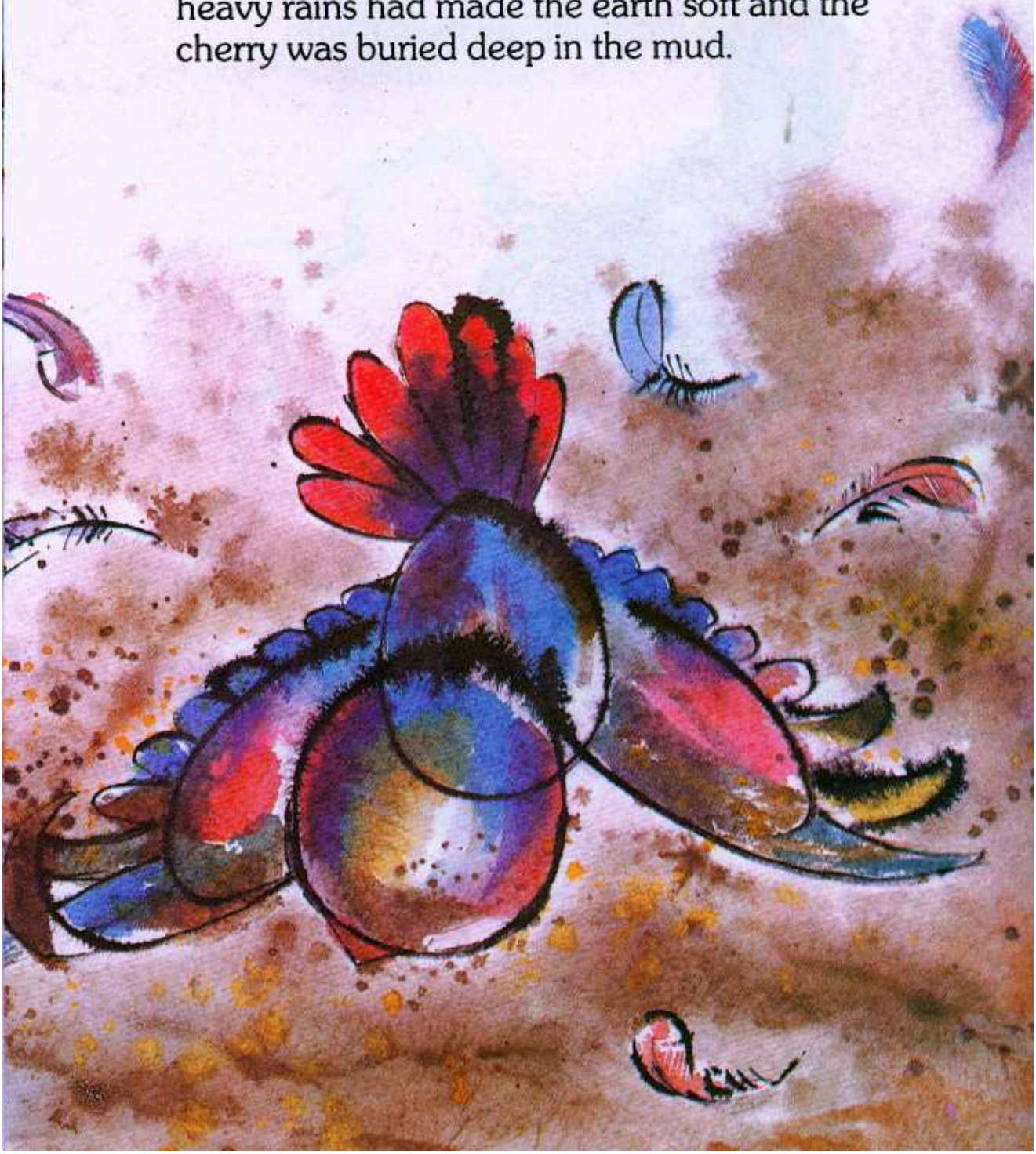
Munia flew over fields and in and out of trees. At last she found a bare, dry branch and perched on it. The blue sky, sun and beautiful rainbow filled her heart with joy. Munia forgot her hunger and began to sing.



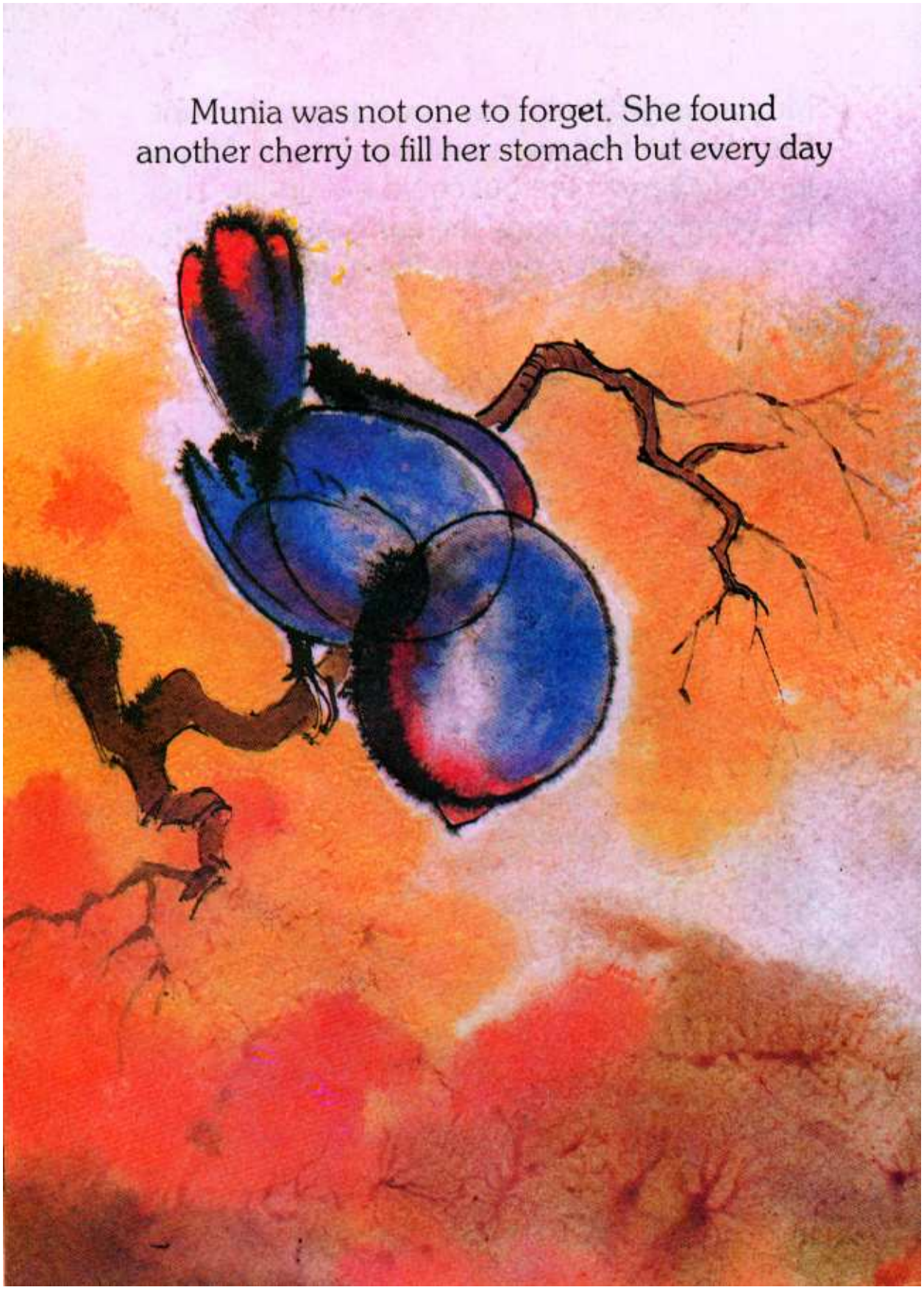
No sooner did Munia open her beak
to sing tnan the cherry dropped
down on the ground.



Munia immediately flew down to get the fruit. But alas the fruit was nowhere in sight. Munia looked everywhere but could not find it. The heavy rains had made the earth soft and the cherry was buried deep in the mud.

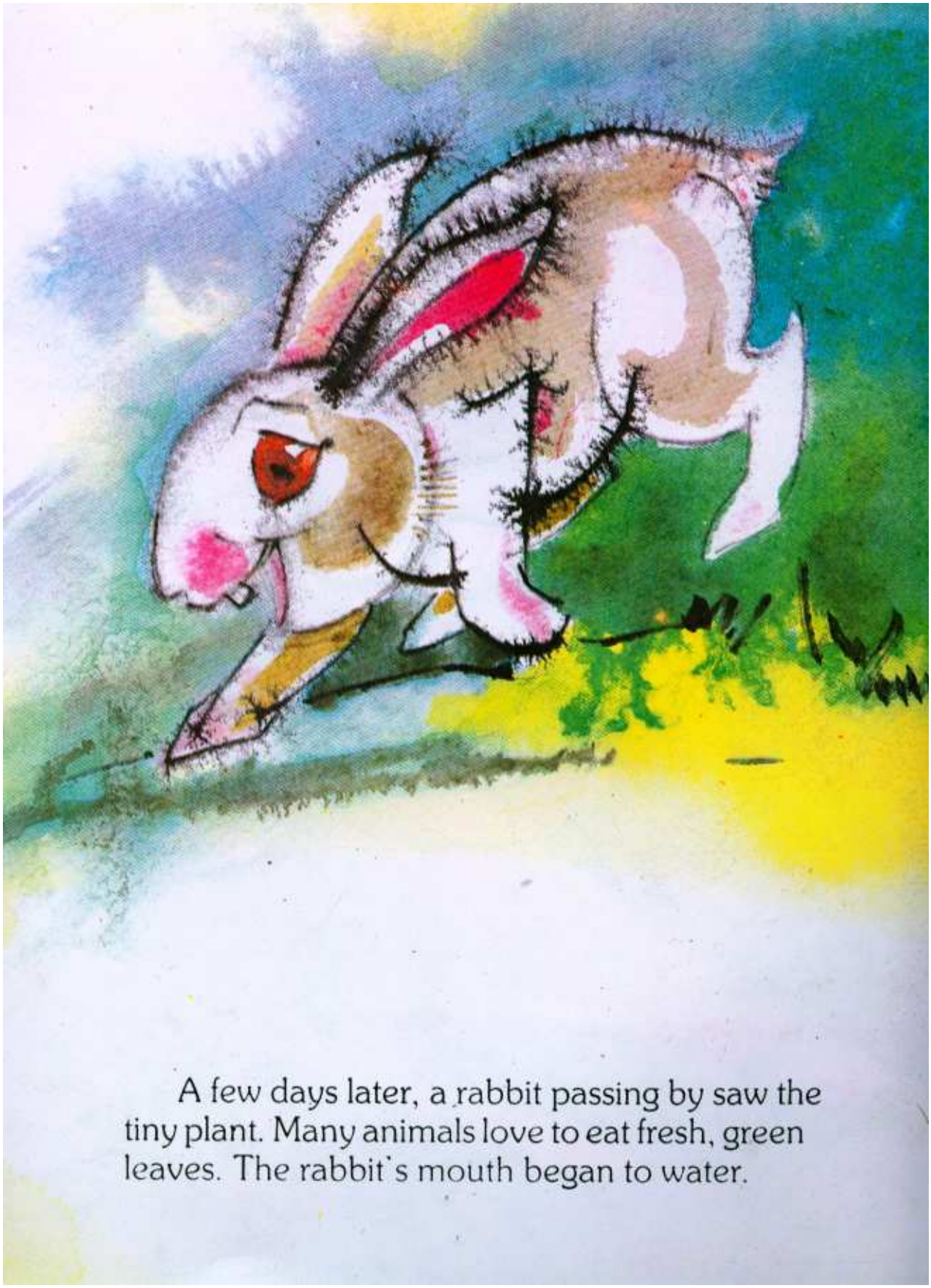


Munia was not one to forget. She found another cherry to fill her stomach but every day

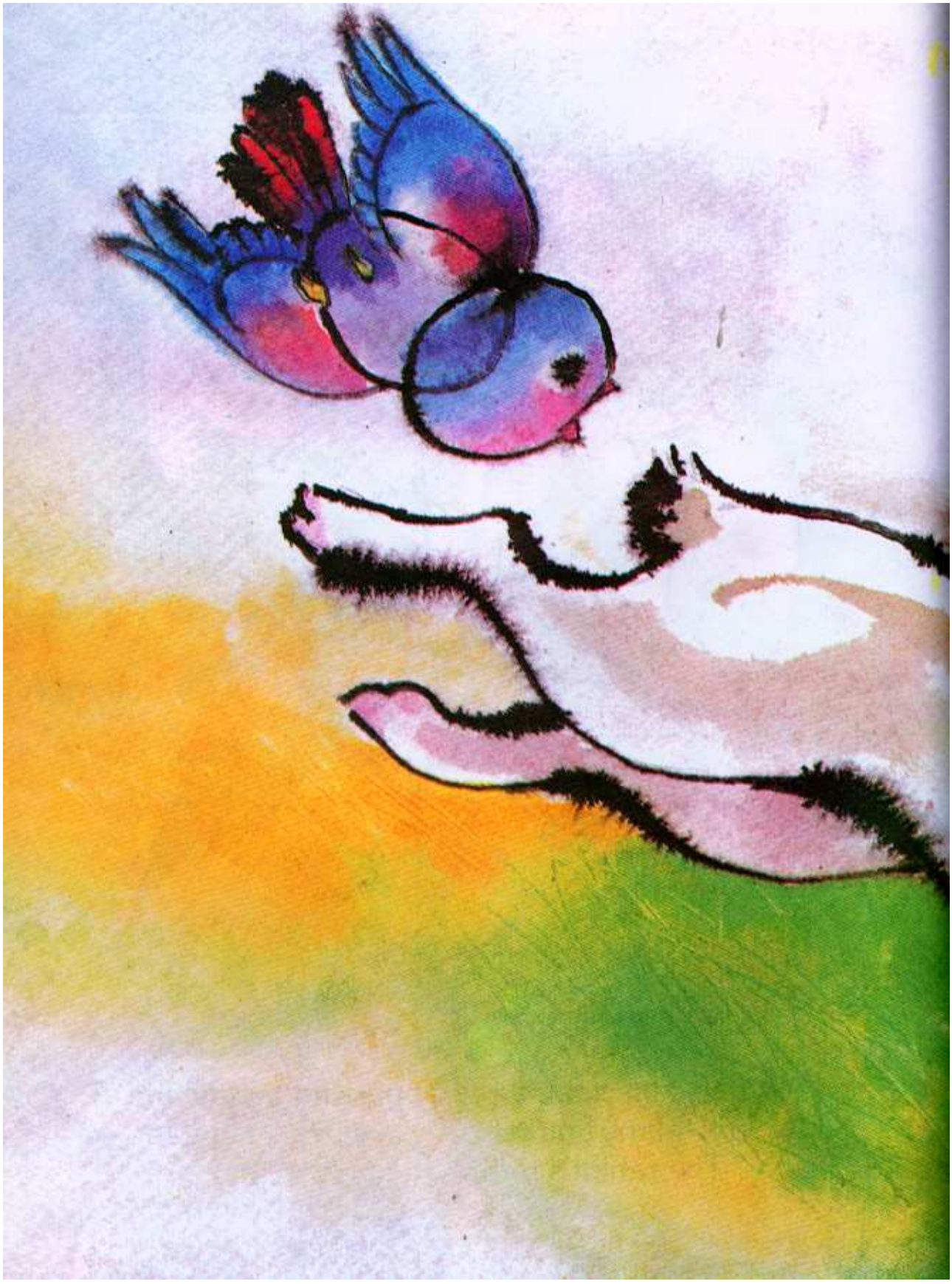


she would return to the old branch to look for the cherry she had lost.

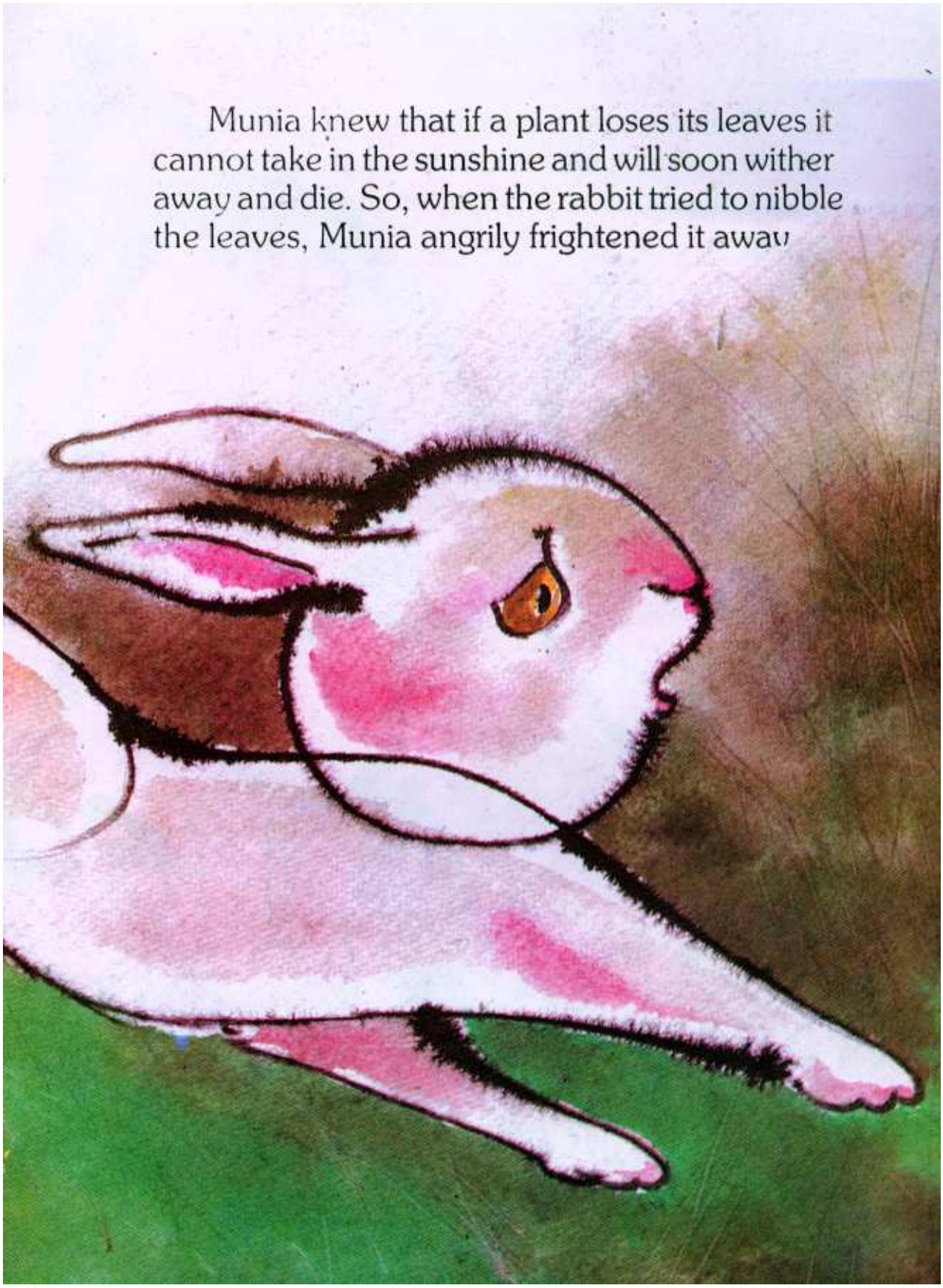
One morning she saw a tiny sapling sprouting out of the earth where she had dropped the cherry. Munia liked the little plant and came every day to keep an eye on it.



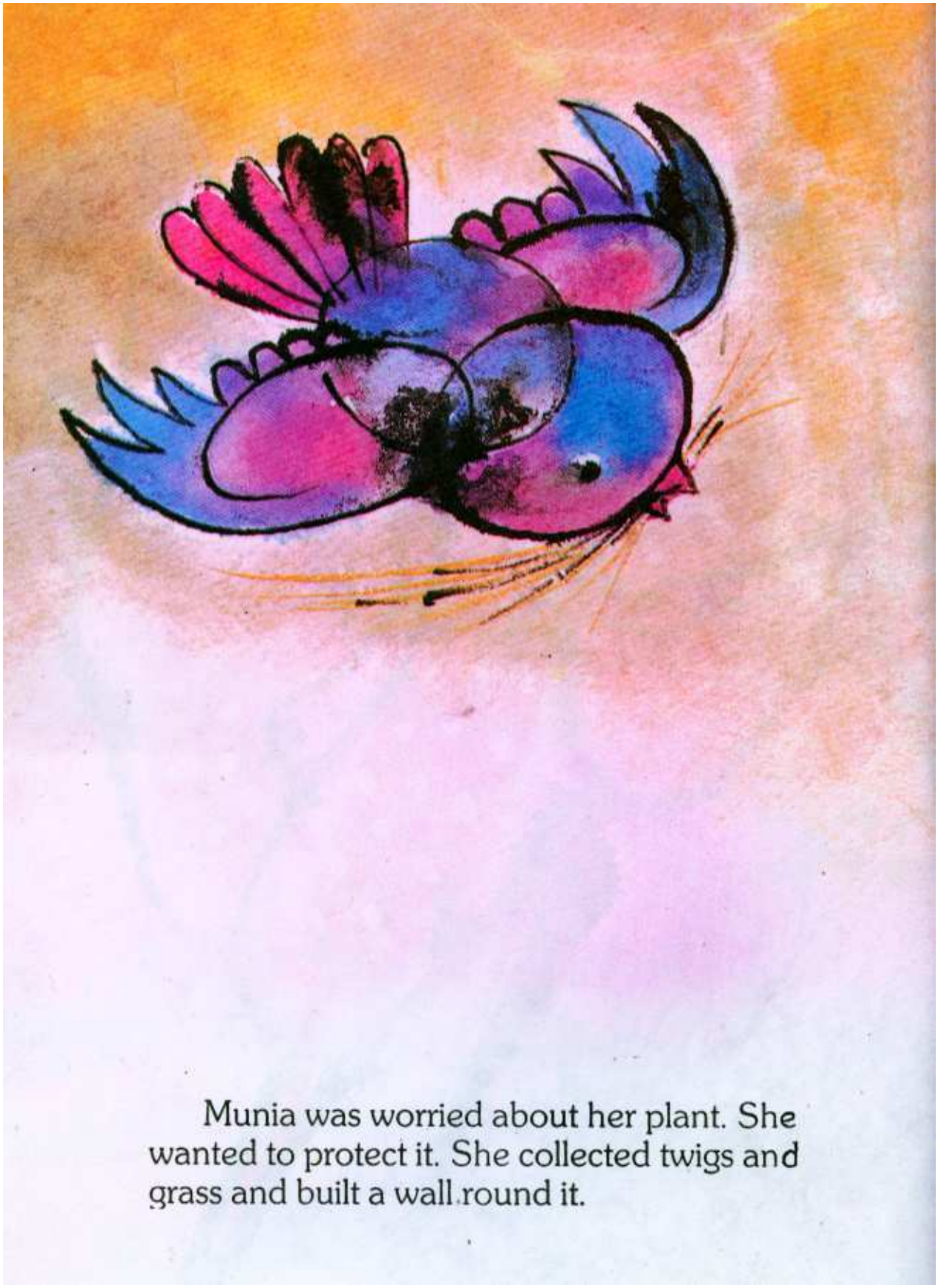
A few days later, a rabbit passing by saw the tiny plant. Many animals love to eat fresh, green leaves. The rabbit's mouth began to water.



Munia knew that if a plant loses its leaves it cannot take in the sunshine and will soon wither away and die. So, when the rabbit tried to nibble the leaves, Munia angrily frightened it awav

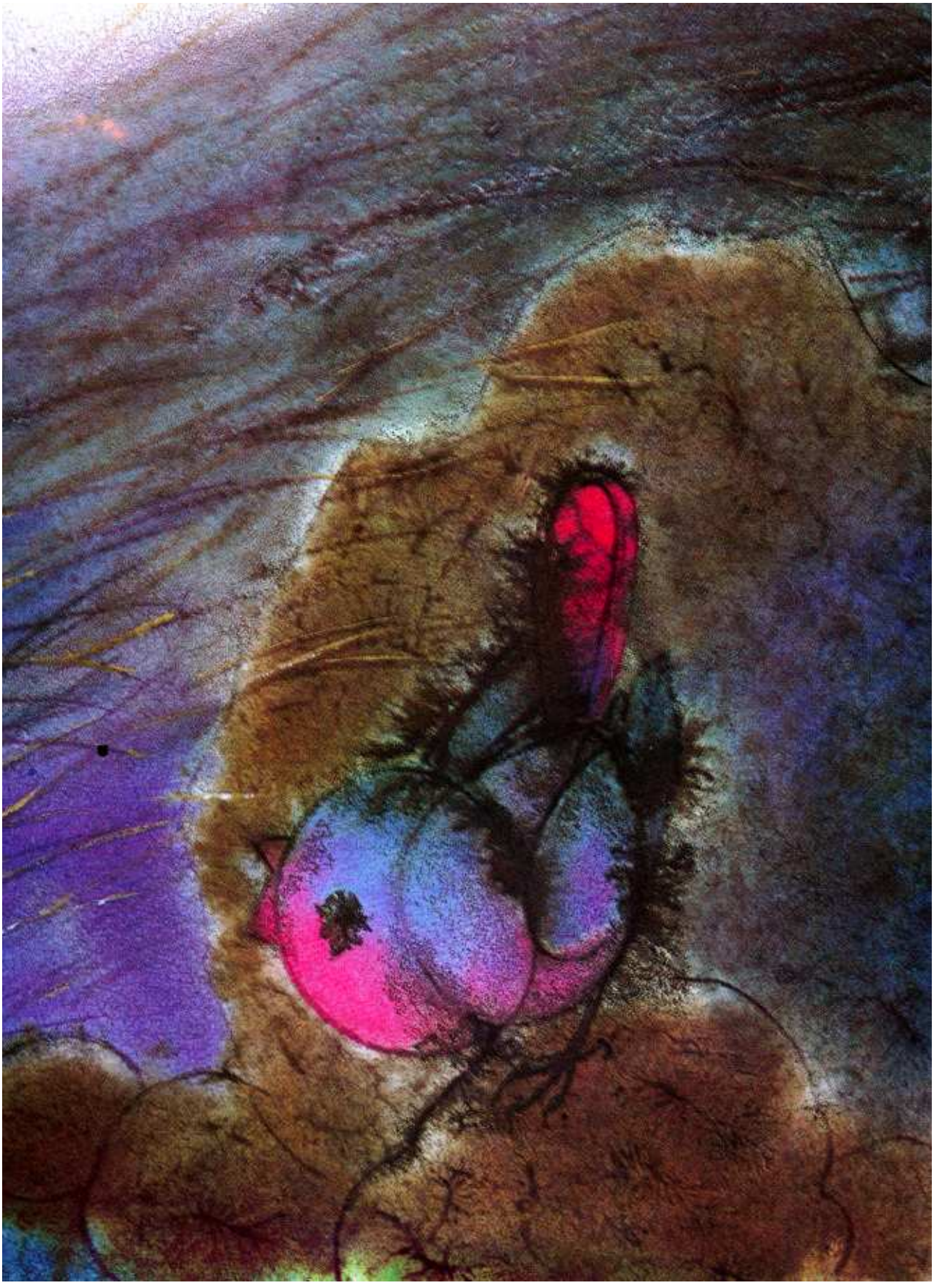


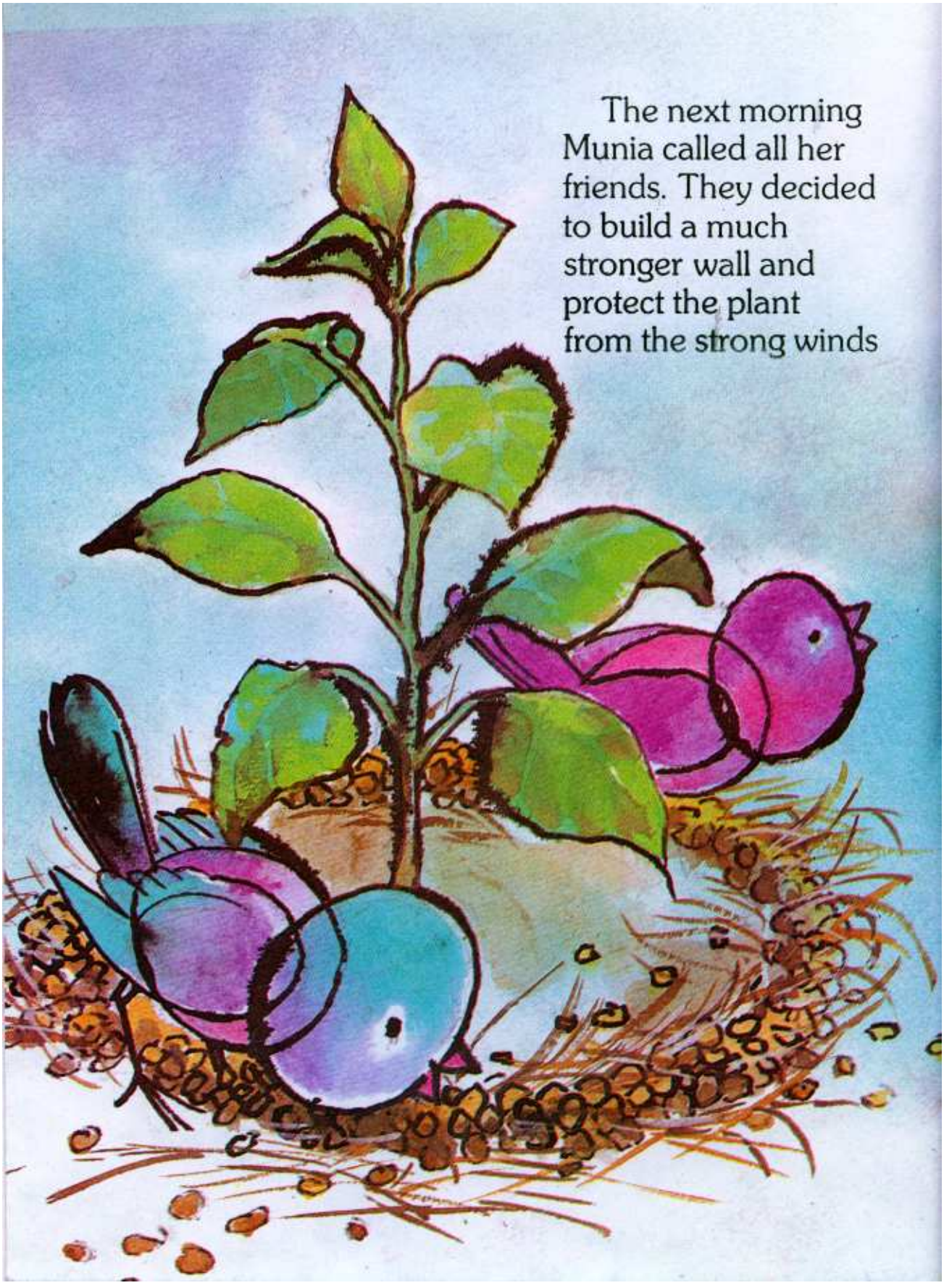
Then one day a fawn came and sniffed at the plant. Just as it was about to eat the leaves, Munia flew down and scolded it. The fawn ran away.



Munia was worried about her plant. She wanted to protect it. She collected twigs and grass and built a wall round it.

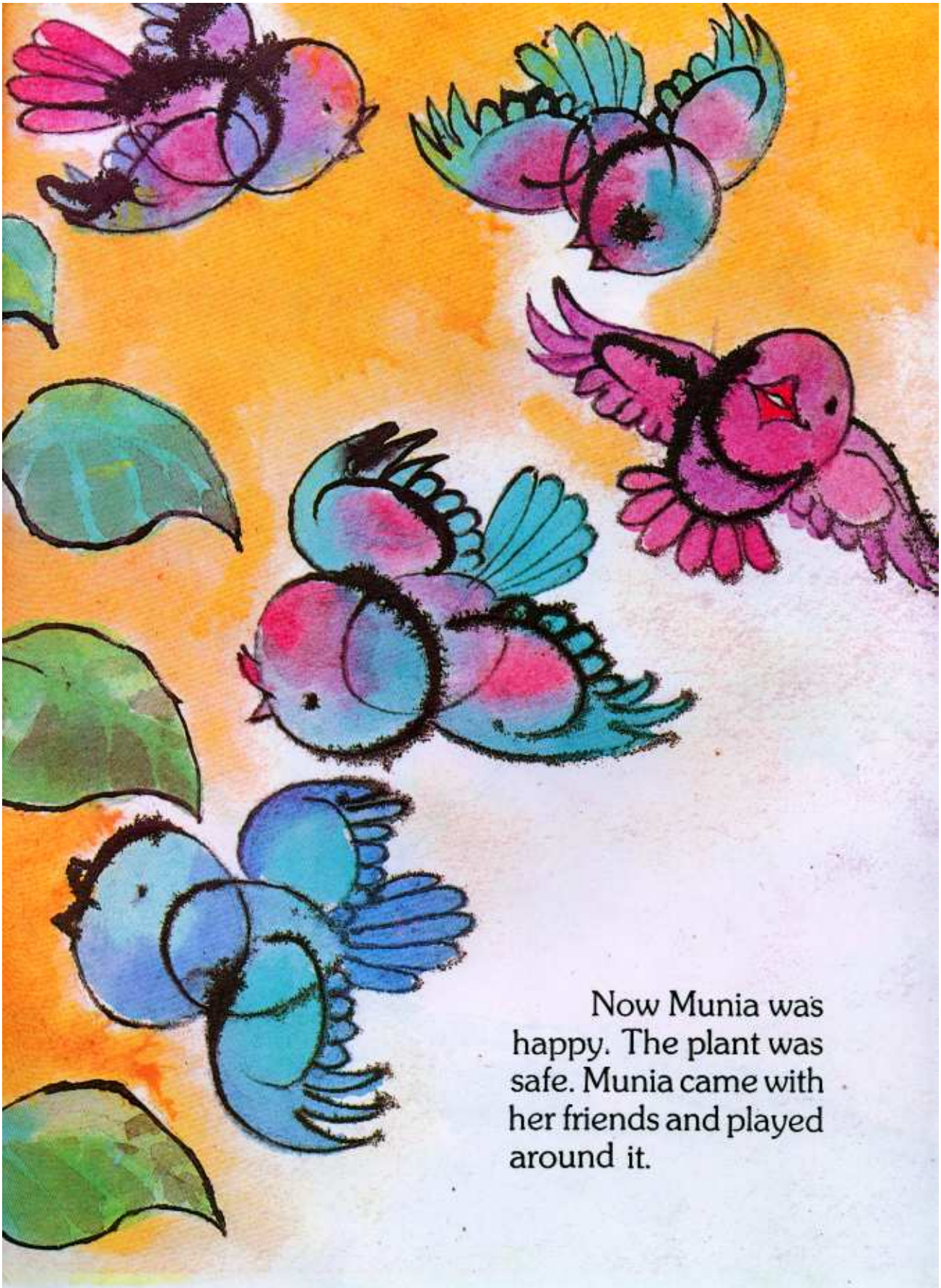
One night there was a duststorm. The twigs and grass were blown away. Hiding behind a big stone, Munia watched helplessly as the tender plant swayed and bent with the wind.



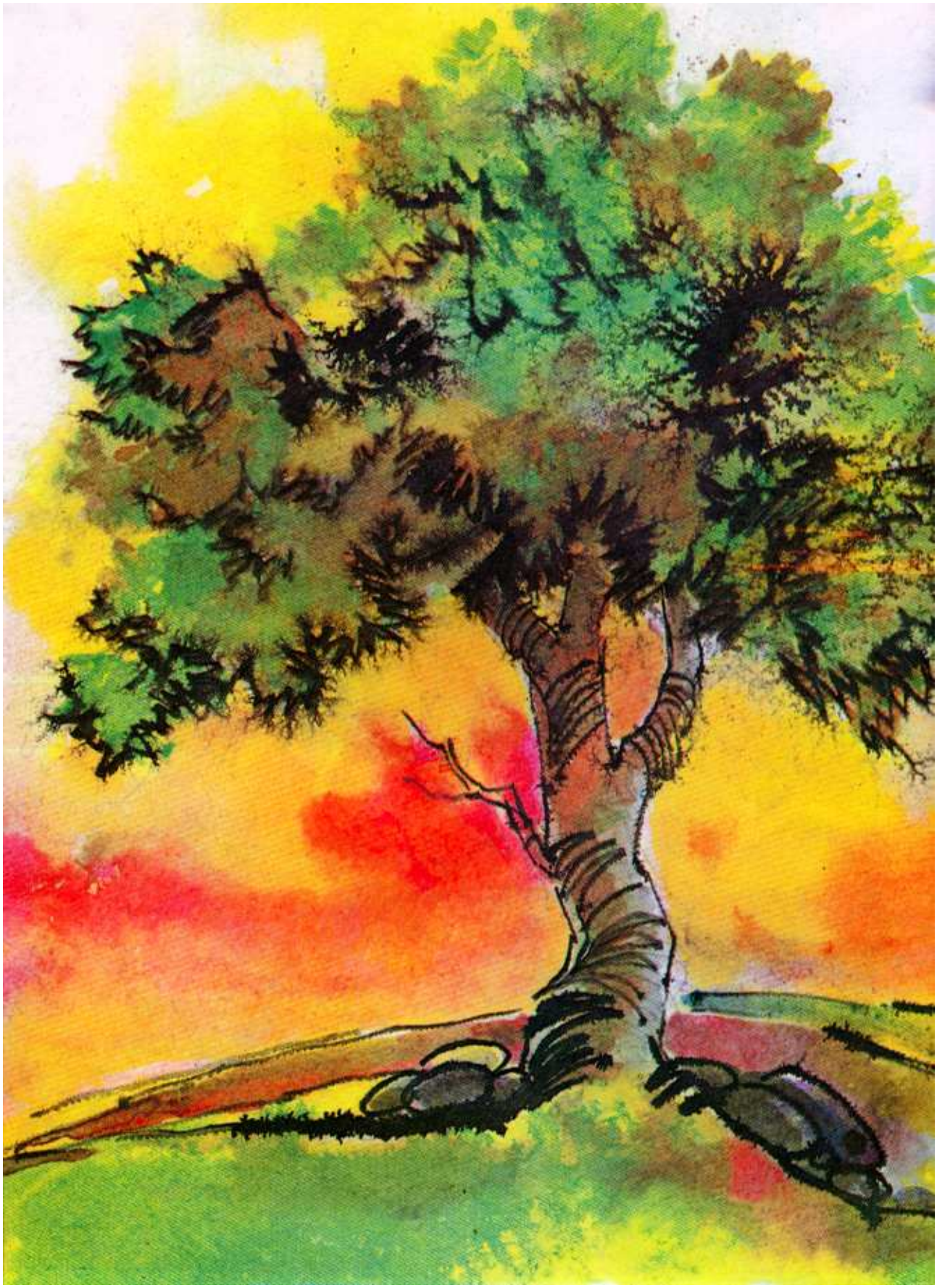


The next morning Munia called all her friends. They decided to build a much stronger wall and protect the plant from the strong winds

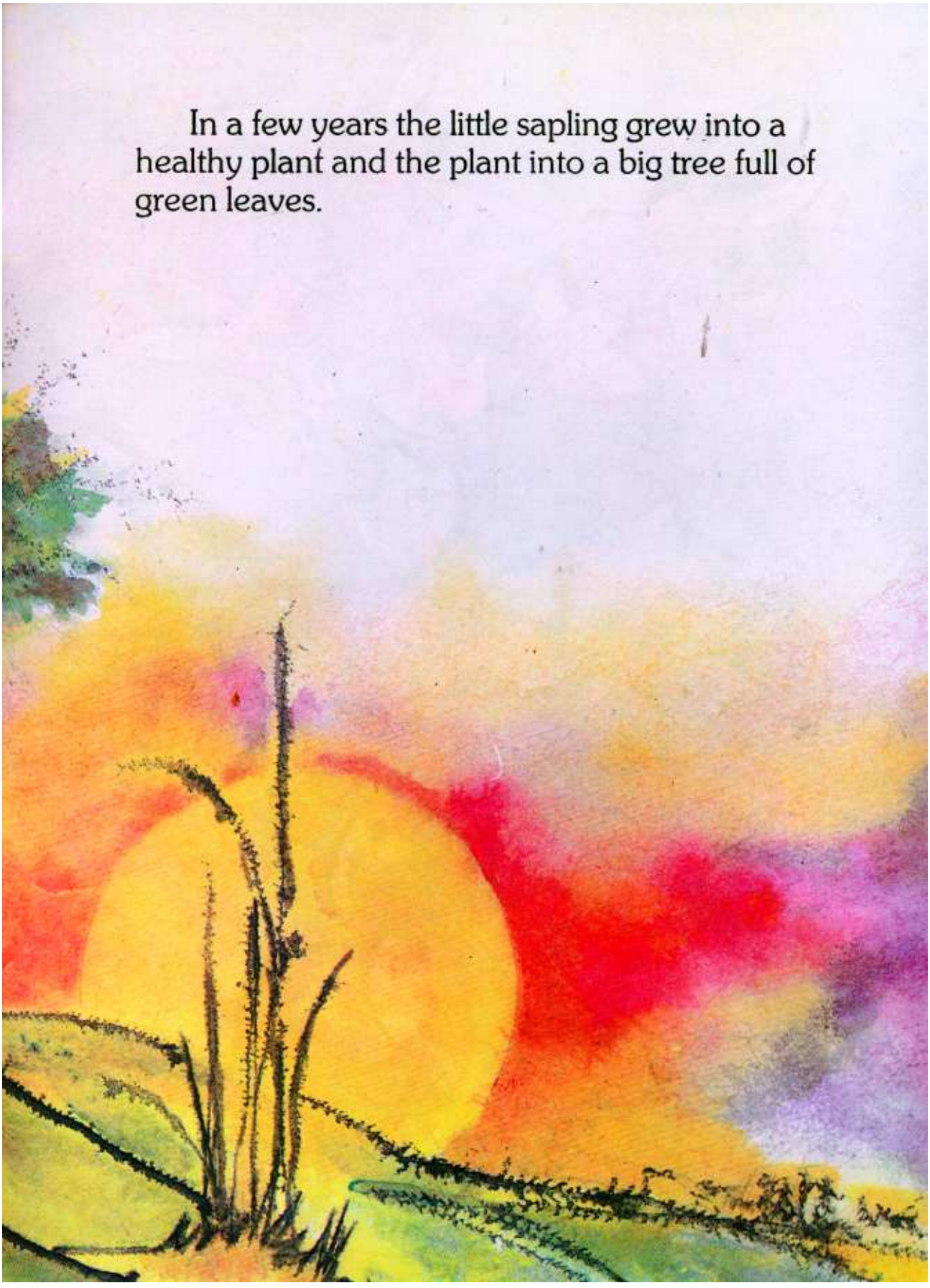
and rains that could pull it out from its roots before the roots had got a firm grip in the ground.



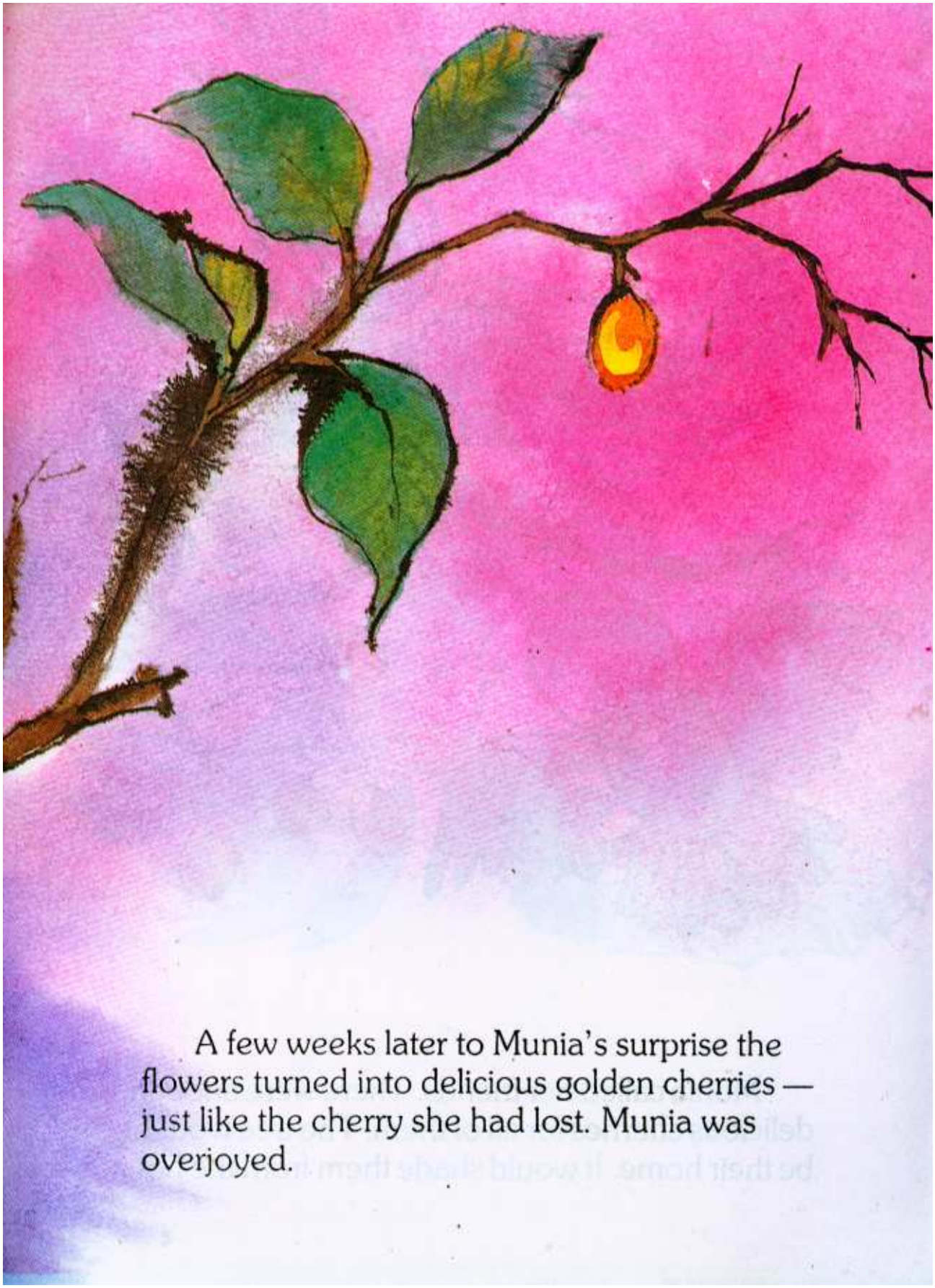
Now Munia was happy. The plant was safe. Munia came with her friends and played around it.



In a few years the little sapling grew into a healthy plant and the plant into a big tree full of green leaves.

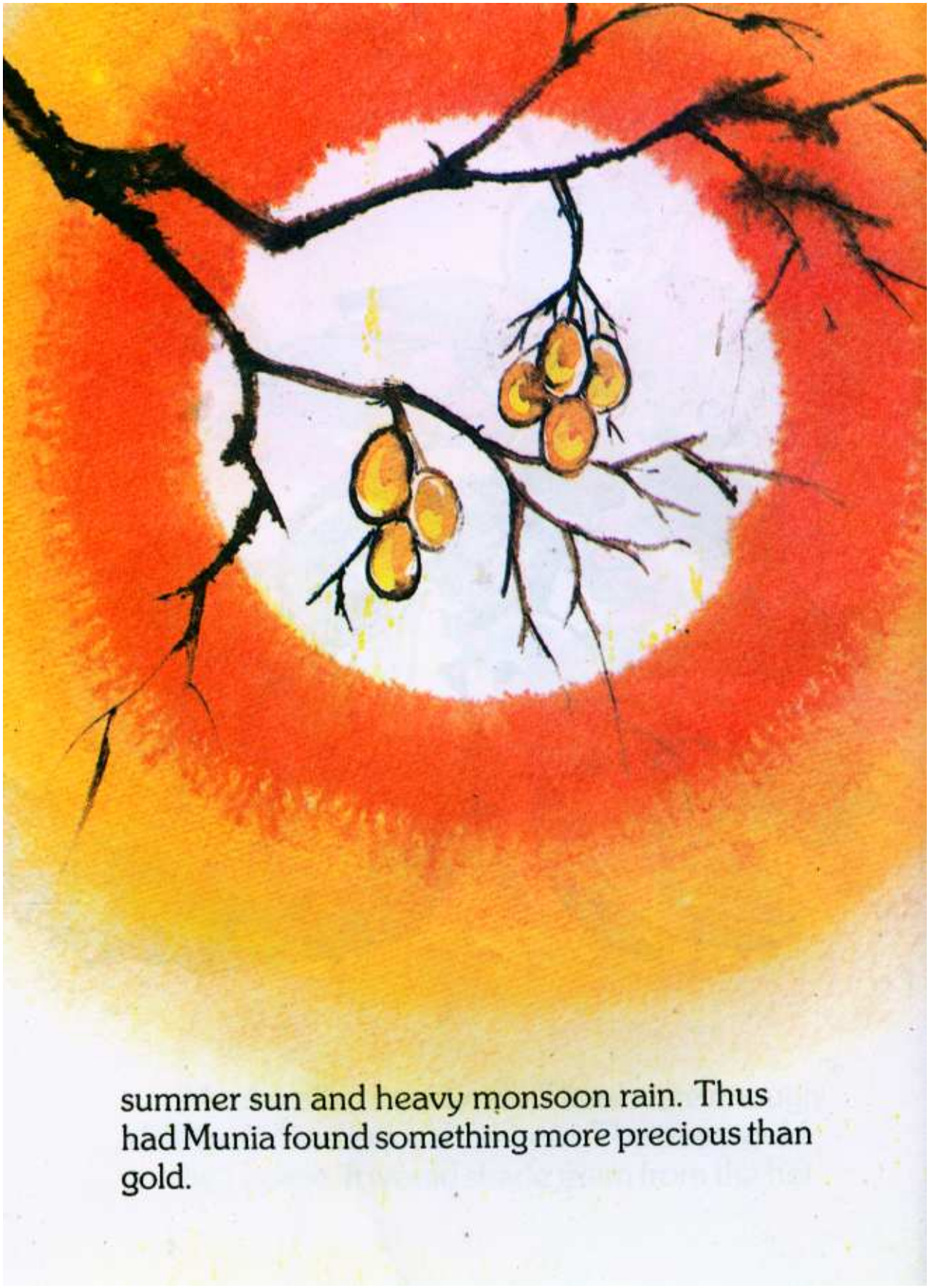


And one spring, Munia saw that the tree was covered with lovely white-and-pink flowers. Bees danced and played among the flowers and sucked their nectar.

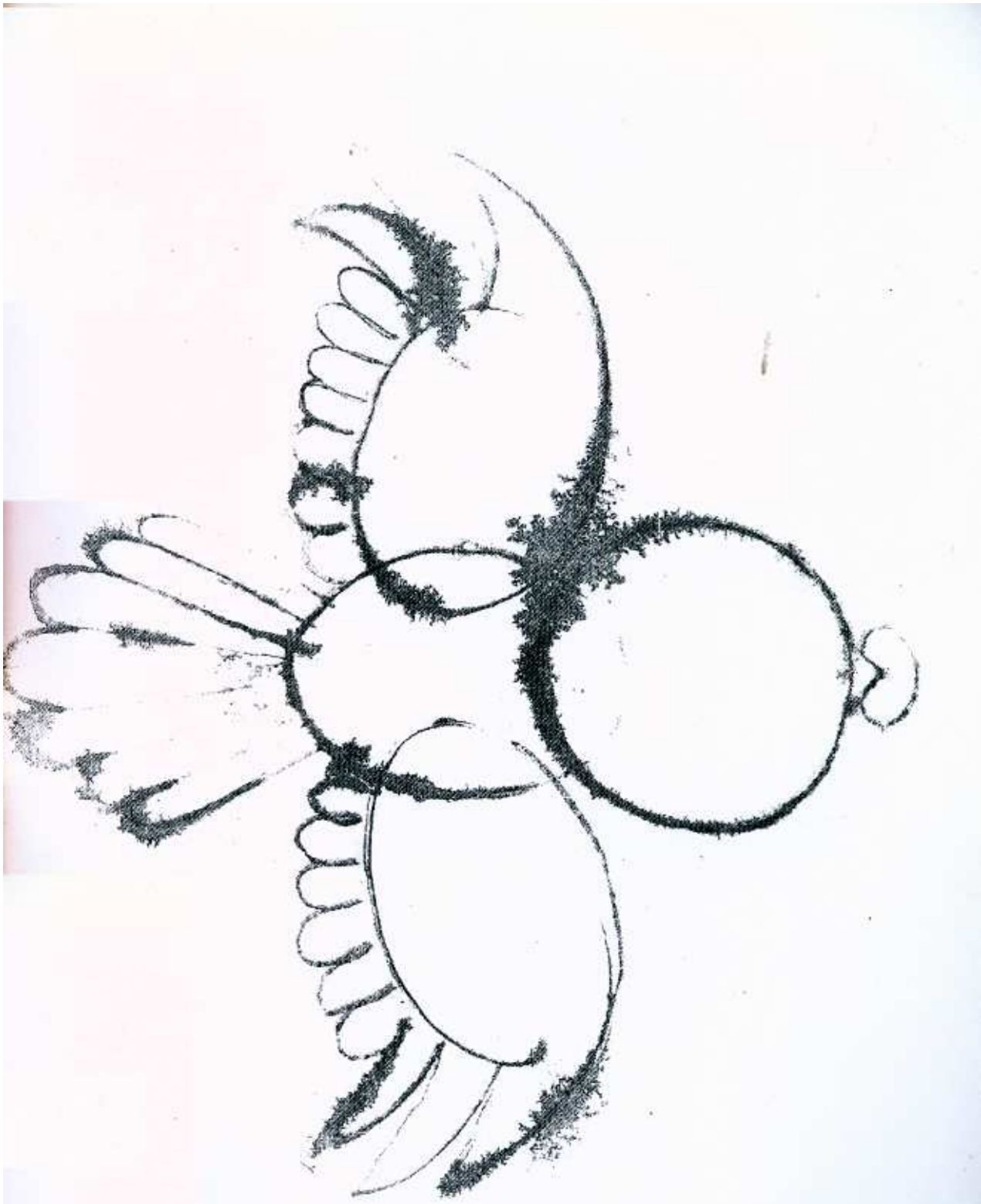


A few weeks later to Munia's surprise the flowers turned into delicious golden cherries — just like the cherry she had lost. Munia was overjoyed.

Munia called her friends. There were enough delicious cherries for all of them. The tree would be their home. It would shade them from the hot



summer sun and heavy monsoon rain. Thus had Munia found something more precious than gold.



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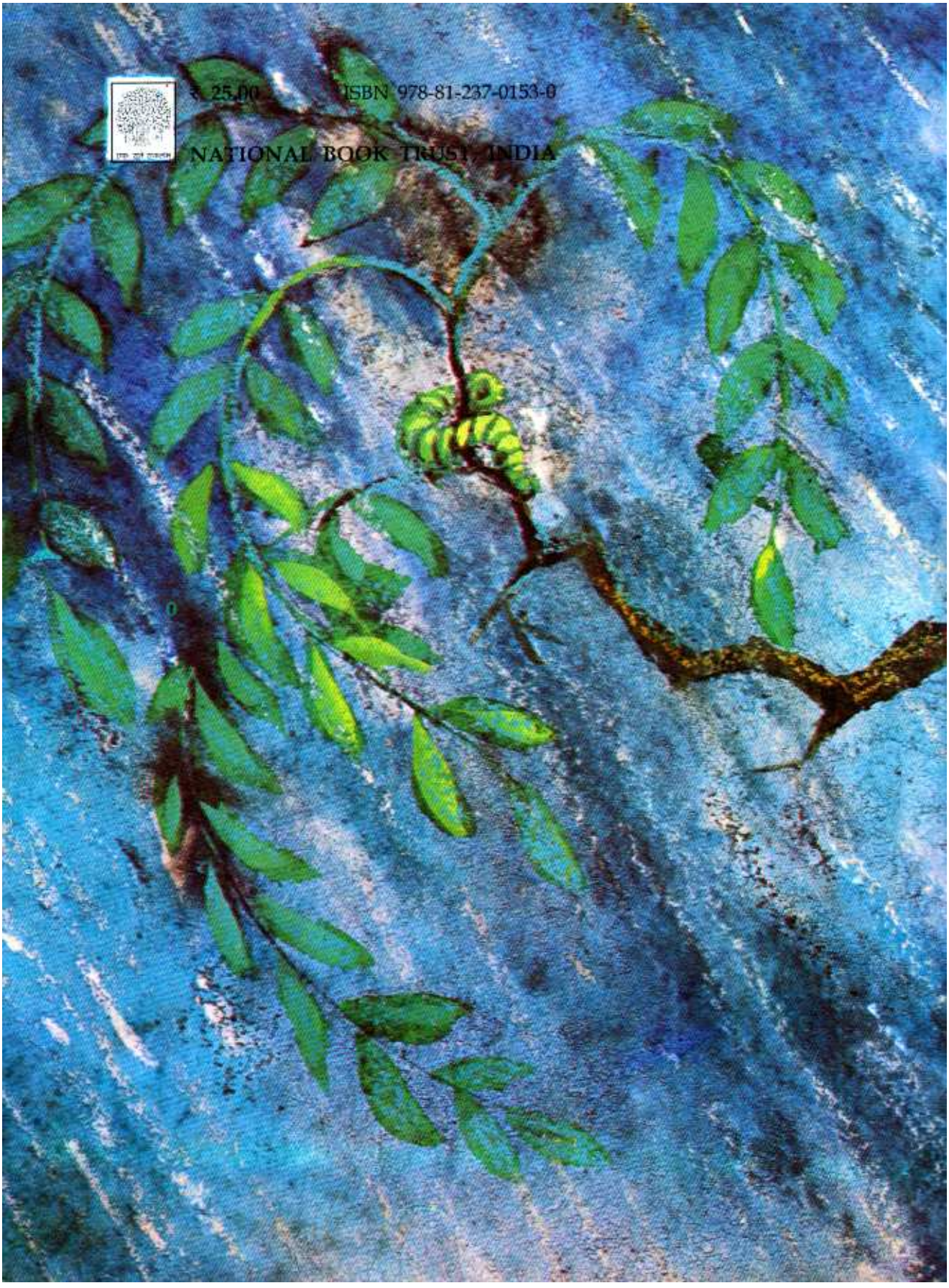

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